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Governor Musgrove Addresses USDA Rural Conference

(Jackson, MS) – Governor Ronnie Musgrove spoke this morning to attendees at a Rural Development Conference in Hattiesburg. The United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development Office and the University of Southern Mississippi presented the conference.

Musgrove told the audience that despite a national recession that was affecting every state, Mississippi would be able to withstand the crisis without increasing taxes.

“We’re dealing with the recession by protecting our people in the short term while preparing for the long term,” Musgrove said. “That means we have to set priorities and stand by them, as we’ve done for education and economic development.”

Musgrove outlined his plan for a Rural Economic Impact Authority to specifically address the issues of job creation and workforce training in rural areas of Mississippi. Under the plan, \$20 million would be provided for aggressive economic development efforts and workforce training at community colleges.

“Economic development is economic development,” Musgrove said. “It doesn’t matter if it’s two people in a truck, or 5,000 people building a truck.”

The importance of the link between education and economic development was also stressed.

“Good schools help attract good jobs, which help build good communities,” said Musgrove.

Musgrove also cited the fact that, for the first time in history, education has been funded early in the legislative session. He signed the education appropriations bills on February 5, less than a month after challenging legislators in his State of the State address to fund education first.

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